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# TODAY'S LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

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## EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY

BY SOPHIE ATKIN

**THE** festive season is all about treats, but people still want to enjoy Christmas without blowing out their health goals.

Food writer Michael Pollan sums it up perfectly when he says: "Eat all the junk you like, but make it yourself." At least then you know there are no preservatives and you can add or subtract any ingredients that may not agree with you.

Leading up to Christmas we are often asked to bring a plate.

Use this invitation as an opportunity to take something that you would like to eat and that will be good for you and everyone else at the party.

If you would like to take something healthy, yet festive to your next Christmas function, here are a few ideas.

These are all quick, tasty and Christmas coloured.

They will look gorgeous served up on a pretty white platter.

If you or someone you are catering for has food intolerances, then these can easily be twisted to suit dairy-free, wheat-free or to be weight-loss friendly, so you don't have to abandon your health goals, whilst relaxing into some festive cheer.

● **Watermelon spritzer:** a very refreshing non-alcoholic punch that can be served between champagnes.

Juice watermelon and mint and serve in beautiful wine glasses, with a twist of orange as a garnish.

● **Bread-free bruschetta:** slice a butternut pumpkin into thin half moon shapes. Roast in the oven for 15 minutes. Remove and top with a layer of sliced tomato, a sliver of hard goat's cheese and place back in the oven until the cheese is toasted, the pumpkin soft. Once cooked set aside to cool, then top with a piece of basil.

● **Little Christmas skewers:** You will need cherry tomatoes, goat's fetta, basil and some toothpicks. Simply layer a one centimetre square of fetta, one cherry tomato, a basil leaf on to a tooth pick.

● **Quinoa and pomegranate salad:** This is a meal unto itself and very Christmasy looking. Perfect as a side at a barbecue. Mix cooked red quinoa with the seeds of one pomegranate, a handful of mint leaves and some toasted pinenuts. Make a simple lemon and olive oil dressing. It is tart, sour, sweet and crunchy. A flavour sensation.

● **Choc orange Christmas truffles:** made from dates, cocoa, orange, vanilla, nuts and coconut.

Other platter ideas: Rice paper rolls, sushi and homemade dips with vegetable sticks or corn chips.

**Naturopath Sophie Atkin is skilled in food and plant medicines and is passionate about promoting good health in country Victoria. She works from Wangaratta's North East Natural Health Centre. For details visit [naturaltherapypages.com.au/naturalhealth](http://naturaltherapypages.com.au/naturalhealth)**